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Jean-Baptiste Etienne

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## Chapter Two

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## Chapter 2

### Jean-Baptiste Étienne A Seminarian from Metz

On 29 September 1820, a seminarian from the diocese of Metz arrived in Paris. The young man's name was Jean-Baptiste Étienne. When he arrived at ninety-five rue de Sèvres he found himself standing before the "new" Saint-Lazare, the mother house of the Congregation of the Mission.<sup>1</sup> This dilapidated building was a far cry from the grand Ancien Régime headquarters, the remnants of which still stood at the other end of the city.<sup>2</sup> In the same way, the reestablished Congregation of the Mission was then but a shadow of what it had been before the revolution.

Étienne entered the internal seminary (novitiate) on 4 October. At the time, no one could have predicted that this new seminarian would one day be elected as the Congregation's fourteenth superior general; let alone that he would preside over the mid-nineteenth-century refoundation, explosive growth, and breathless international expan-

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Étienne was born on 10 August 1801. His birthplace was the town of Longeville, located a short distance from Metz in the department of Moselle. He was one of six children (three boys and three girls) of Charles Étienne and Anne-Marguerite Geoffroy. For more information on Étienne's family background and his early years before entering the Congregation see *Étienne: Biographie*, C 40, II 2, W, 1-7, ACMP. See also Edouard Rosset, C.M., *Vie de M. Jean-Baptiste Étienne* (Paris: Congrégation de la Mission, 1881).

<sup>2</sup> Article three of the 1804 decree reestablishing the Congregation provided that the government would assign the community a suitable building in Paris as its headquarters (*Actes du Gouvernement*, 75-76). It would take thirteen years and repeated requests from the French Lazarists before the government finally found a building that was inexpensive and had no other possible public use. During the Napoleonic era, the government first promised the Congregation that it would erect a new parish and assign it to the community. Later, it promised the church of Saint-Louis and its adjoining buildings that formerly had belonged to the Jesuits (AN.F4.1562.46). Next, the government promised a house on the rue du Vieux-Colombier that the Daughters of Charity were occupying (See AN.F4.1562.84). After the Bourbon Restoration, the Congregation requested the crown to restore the remaining buildings comprising the original Saint-Lazare. These were not yet alienated. See, for example, the letter of Jean-Jacques Dubois to Louis XVIII of 9 October 1816, (AN.F19.6240.60. Because of its utility as a prison, the government declined to return the buildings to the Lazarists. Finally in 1817, the government purchased the old hôtel des Lorges on the rue de Sèvres to provide a mother house for the newly restored Congregation (*Actes du Gouvernement*, 121-22). In subsequent years, the government also authorized the purchase of adjacent land tracts on both the rue de Sèvres and the rue du Cherche-Midi. These provided room for even further expansion (*ibid.*, 137). For a brief description of the buildings of the new Saint-Lazare as they appeared when Étienne entered the Congregation see Rosset, *Vie Étienne*, 17.

sion of the Double Family of Saint Vincent.<sup>3</sup>

Fifty years later in 1870, in his twenty-seventh year as superior general, Étienne celebrated the golden anniversary of his vocation.<sup>4</sup> On New Year's Day the first assistant general, Eugène Vicart, addressed Étienne at a community gathering: "We are fond of regarding you as our second founder. If ever anyone contests this title, if one day, the Company should forget what you have done for it, the stones themselves will cry out and rightly accuse us of ingratitude."<sup>5</sup> At the time, Étienne said he sensed "that the end of my earthly career is not far away."<sup>6</sup> He felt "an obligation to posterity" to publish what he described as a *précis historique*. This document would recount the "difficulties of all kinds and the diverse and extraordinary phases" that had led to what he variously described as the "new existence," the "reestablishment," the "restoration," the "new creation," or the "second creation" of the Congregation. These events transformed the community within a single generation (Étienne's own) from its postrevolutionary "ruins" to a "spectacle of edification for the whole world."<sup>7</sup>

Was anyone better qualified than Étienne to record the details of "the special heavenly intervention" that had revealed "the particular and merciful designs of providence" upon the community? He never tired of pointing out that he had lived at the mother house for his entire community life. Étienne also noted that it had been his "exceptional personal destiny and providential mission to have...been a witness and usually a participant" in the "often painful" but "grand enterprise" of the "restoration."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Étienne arrived in Paris with the required exeat signed by the bishop of Metz, Gaspar-Jean-André-Joseph Jauffret. He also carried a testimony of good conduct signed on 27 September, by the pastor of the parish at Goïu where he had spent the summer. After two years in the internal seminary, Étienne pronounced his vows on 28 October 1822. He was ordained to the priesthood on 24 September 1825 by the archbishop of Paris, Hyacinth-Louis de Quélen. For the originals of these and other personal documents see *Étienne: Biographie*, ACPM.

<sup>4</sup> Étienne's Vincentian vocation resulted from his contact with the Daughters of Charity at the Hospice des Bons-Secours in Metz. He was hospitalized there once as a seminarian. With the sisters' encouragement, and after having read Collet's biography of Saint Vincent, "the decisive blow was struck." Étienne resolved to enter the Congregation. See Rosset, *Vie Étienne*, 7-8. From the time of Saint Vincent until the Revolution, the Congregation administered the seminary of the diocese of Metz, and the Daughters of Charity staffed several institutions there. For more information on the work of the Double Family in Metz and in Lorraine see Joseph Girard, C.M., *Saint Vincent de Paul son oeuvre et son influence en Lorraine* (Metz: Curé de Saint-Simon, 1955).

<sup>5</sup> Amédée Allou, C.M., "Précis de l'histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission depuis sa fondation jusqu'à la mort de M. Étienne en 1874," *Annales* 90 (1925): 182.

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Baptiste Étienne, C.M., *Notice sur le rétablissement de la Congrégation de la Mission après la Revolution de 1789* (Paris: Congrégation de la Mission, 1870), 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Despite the "repeated requests of many confreres," Étienne said he had long hesitated over whether he should publish such a history. He feared that if he did, "someone might erroneously attribute to me some role in this grand providential work." When Étienne finally decided to write, he said he would avoid this misconception by demonstrating how "the Company's second creation," like its first under Saint Vincent, was "the work of God alone."

Étienne never doubted that the events he had witnessed were "a providential mystery" that he described as being "impossible for me to explain from any human point of view."<sup>9</sup> Thus, his explanation for "the glory of this truly miraculous operation" was a mythic one.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, he quoted Saint Vincent, who had always spoken of the Congregation's foundation in this way: "Can you say that something was the result of human effort if no one foresaw, willed, or purposely sought after this end? 'By the Lord has this been done, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'"<sup>11</sup>

Étienne admitted that some superficial similarities existed between the man chosen by God and given the mission to found the Double Family and the man chosen by God and given the mission to restore it. He noted, for example, that both he and Saint Vincent were from "humble and obscure villages," and both he and the founder "had never had any doubts about God's designs upon us."<sup>12</sup> He saw an irreducible difference, however, between Saint Vincent and himself: Vincent had been a saint, while he most assuredly was not. The founder had "possessed an ensemble of personal virtues and qualities, a profound knowledge, and a powerful genius," Étienne freely admitted that he possessed none of these.

These differences of sanctity and talent between Étienne and Saint Vincent were what made the Double Family's "second creation" "even more marvelous than the first."<sup>13</sup> After all, God had brought about the new creation using a frail human instrument who was obviously quite inferior to the saint whom he had used in the first instance.

Étienne began his creation myth at the point when the community took possession of the new Saint-Lazare on 9 November 1817. This was the place that he described as "the birthplace of Saint Vincent's

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> "Extrait d'entretien: Sur la formation du clergé," Coste, *CED*, 11: 7, citing Psalm 118: 23.

<sup>12</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

new family," its "stable at Bethlehem."<sup>14</sup> The small community living at the mother house when Étienne arrived included fourteen old men who were "the venerable debris of the ancient edifice built by the Founder's hands."<sup>15</sup>

Étienne testified that it was from "these venerable Missionaries...that I first learned the details of the Company's reestablishment in the years before I entered its midst."<sup>16</sup> These missionaries had proved themselves worthy "through their personal virtues, their constancy in enduring the privations and sufferings of exile, and their devotion to the Congregation."<sup>17</sup> "God in his eternal wisdom chose"<sup>18</sup> these missionaries "to be the links that would join the new generations of Missionaries to the Congregation's primitive era." They were "the foundation stones for the new edifice."<sup>19</sup>

The Bourbon restoration of the Congregation's legal existence came in February 1816.<sup>20</sup> Soon after this, the community's French vicar general, Dominique Hanon<sup>21</sup> issued a circular letter addressed to "all our former confreres [in France] who have remained faithful to their sacred state and have told us of their desire to help reestablish the beautiful work of Saint Vincent de Paul."<sup>22</sup>

Étienne estimated that at the time, "several hundred" former Lazarists held posts among the diocesan clergy. The number who rejoined the Congregation in France was much less than one hundred. The decision of so many not to return, according to Étienne, "was not something the community should have regretted." He observed, "Undoubtedly their spirit and their habits would have been an obstacle to

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>20</sup> From the time they first petitioned Louis XVIII for their restoration, the French Lazarists prided themselves on his description of them as "the priests of the Bourbons." See for example the memo of April 1825 (unsigned but in Étienne's handwriting) entitled, *Note relative à la demande d'une maison, faite par les Prêtres de la Congrégation de la Mission de St. Lazare*, ACMP. For proof of Louis XVIII's personal appreciation see BN, Fr. Nouv. Acq. 21798.2.4. *Recueil de documents originaux minutes et copies, relatifs à la Congrégation des Lazaristes: 1825-27*. In this account of a meeting of the Council of State, Louis supported the request made by the Lazarists for the return of old Saint-Lazare. The king noted appreciatively that the Lazarists had taught him as a child at Versailles, that a Lazarist had accompanied his wife in her exile from France, and that the community had suffered during the revolutionary era for its loyalty. The community's attachment and undying loyalty to the Bourbons would be jettisoned immediately, and forgotten, after the July revolution of 1830.

<sup>21</sup> For a short biographical sketch of Hanon see *Circulaires*, 2: 280-82.

<sup>22</sup> Hanon, *Circulaires*, 2: 290-91. Hanon requested these former missionaries to tell him how soon he could expect each of them to rejoin, what functions they had performed before the revolution, what ministries they had performed since the adoption of the 1801 Concordat, the places where they had ministered, and the type of work they might prefer on their return.

the reestablishment of primitive regularity." In saying this, Étienne was repeating the judgments made by "the nucleus of those Missionaries who had been faithful to the grace of their vocation."<sup>23</sup>

Étienne recalled another lesson that he had learned from these missionaries: "If during the revolution, the Congregation shared the fate of the other religious institutions, this was because like them it had fallen into relaxation, irregularity, and had forgotten the end of the Institute." He quoted one of the survivors whom he had heard say, "Blessed Revolution, which in despoiling us of all our possessions has reestablished us along the path of our duty."<sup>24</sup>

Étienne described the French Revolution as having "destroyed the old world, burying all traditions, social norms, and overthrowing its monarchies, in order to establish a new world that was under the empire of democracy." Amid this "frightening tempest...one bright light shone in the darkness...one name did not fall into the abyss which the rest of society had fallen." This name was that of Vincent de Paul.<sup>25</sup>

At the height of the revolutionary terror, "the National Convention seemed determined to efface the entire history of France." However, according to Étienne, its members stopped when they came to the figure of Saint Vincent, and "they instead bowed their heads in respect." The Convention ordered that the saint's statue be placed in the Pantheon.<sup>26</sup> From this gesture, Étienne drew his own mythic conclusions: "Was this not an indication of the great charitable mission that democracy had opened to the Double Family in the interest of religion? Was this not the first dawning ray of a prosperous new day lying just beyond a vast and brilliant horizon? Subsequent events confirmed this interpretation."<sup>27</sup>

To make sense of "this interpretation," it should be remembered that Étienne's career and his creation myth were built upon a Vincentian-centric world view. In April 1864, Étienne traveled to Vincent de Paul's birthplace outside Dax. The trip's purpose was the dedication of a new shrine-complex erected in the saint's honor.<sup>28</sup> Étienne gave an address on this occasion that is a precursor of his later

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<sup>23</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Secularized at the time of the French Revolution, the church of Sainte-Geneviève was rededicated for civil use as the Pantheon to commemorate the memory of great Frenchmen.

<sup>27</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> See Étienne, *Circulaires*, 3: 158-62, 264-69.

Étienne described Vincent de Paul in the same terms as God had described Saint Paul when he said: "This man is the instrument [*vase d'élection*] I have chosen to bring my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel."<sup>30</sup> Étienne said that in the person of Vincent de Paul, and in his "providential earthly mission" were to be found "the revelation of one of the most magnificent expressions of divine grace."<sup>31</sup> Étienne explained that the Lord gives each age the "extraordinary saint" it requires.<sup>32</sup> He claimed that whether one considered the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, or even future centuries, Vincent de Paul was just such a saint. Succeeding ages all recognized him as a "prodigy of charity."<sup>33</sup> He "justly merited" the titles of "the restorer of religion, the apostle of charity...the apostle of modern times...and the savior of the fatherland."<sup>34</sup>

Étienne described the conditions that Vincent had encountered in seventeenth-century France. "With the end of feudalism, the wars of religion, and the political struggles...a new era had opened and society was suffering from the birth of a new order that was establishing itself upon the ruins of the old one. As in all eras of social transformation, disorder appeared everywhere. All kinds of calamities afflicted the people....In a word, the old social edifice was collapsing and leading to disorder and anarchy."<sup>35</sup> God brought forth Vincent de Paul to save and regenerate France. This saint's "powerful and salutary influence dissipated the darkness enveloping the social body, renewed its vital life forces, and directed it toward its new and grand destinies."<sup>36</sup>

According to Étienne, Vincent met the charitable challenges underlying the chaos of his age through the establishment of a "magnificent system of public charity." This system "addressed all humanity's miseries and misfortunes, from those of the abandoned infant to those of the elderly approaching their deaths."<sup>37</sup> Étienne then issued a challenge to his listeners. "Consult history; look to the record of the

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<sup>29</sup>Jean-Baptiste Étienne, *Discours prononcé par M. Étienne supérieur général des prêtres de la Mission et des Filles de la Charité, à l'inauguration du monument érigé sur le lieu de la naissance de saint Vincent de Paul; le 24 avril 1864* (Paris: Congrégation de la Mission, 1864), *Étienne: Écrits et Documents*, C 40, bas #3, Dossier A-8, ACMP.

<sup>30</sup>Acts of the Apostles 9: 15b.

<sup>31</sup>Étienne, *Discours*, 5.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 7, 12.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

centuries that preceded his era. You will find none of these marvelous and eminently Christian institutions that are the honor of our country. If I am not mistaken, history will only tell you of noble inspirations that remained only these. It will tell you of generous attempts to build a dike against an ever increasing flood of suffering and miseries that desolated the people. However, these attempts all were destined to remain unsuccessful."<sup>38</sup> What the rich and powerful were unable to do was done with a "prodigious success" by a "poor priest who was without fortune or support." This priest "had a marvelous talent to touch other people's hearts, to move them to follow him in his attempts to help the poor." According to Étienne, these charitable works "arose in the capital as if by magic and soon spread throughout the provinces." This proved that Vincent "seemed to possess in his heart the secrets of divine mercy, and in his hands the power of God himself."<sup>39</sup>

Continuing his analysis of seventeenth-century France, Étienne noted the existence of "other wounds tormenting the fatherland, wounds that also were difficult to heal."<sup>40</sup> He explained that Saint Vincent saw a cause and effect relationship between the troubles afflicting French society and the "ruin and desolation" of the French Church.<sup>41</sup> The Church's troubles, in turn, resulted from the deplorable state of its clergy. The first step in the Church's mission to restore "peace, concord, and progress" to French society thus had to be "the reformation of its clergy."<sup>42</sup>

According to Étienne, France also owed the restoration of "an enlightened and wise clerical discipline" to Vincent de Paul. This restoration came about through his "strong and complete organization of our seminaries, spiritual retreats, and ecclesiastical conferences." Soon after these measures were in place, "legions of priests formed at this school and animated with his spirit spread throughout our provinces dissipating ignorance, reforming morals, and devoting themselves to the people's regeneration." These reforms made the French clergy what Étienne claimed it remained in the nineteenth century, "the Catholic world's premiere and most influential."<sup>43</sup>

This brought Étienne to the point where he introduced the central mythic theme that he would repeat six years later: "In the midst of

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Coste, *CED*, 11: 308-10. See also *ibid.*, 7: 463, 12: 86.

<sup>42</sup> Étienne, *Discours*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*



these gloomy shadows that covered our bleeding country, a single ray of light and hope appeared. The name of Saint Vincent de Paul was acclaimed in the middle of these scenes of disorder and anarchy. Just as in the past, 'the spirit of God hovered over the waters'<sup>44</sup> of the chaos from which the primitive world would be born; the spirit of Vincent de Paul hovered over the abyss of calamities from which would arise a new France, and following that a new world."<sup>45</sup> These considerations caused Étienne to expound on the significance of the statue of Saint Vincent that the Convention had ordered to be erected in the Pantheon: "Oh, the profound riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible and admirable are his counsels!...It was not without a merciful purpose that this blessed name received the homages of these workers of hell. It was not without a purpose that you, O God, imprinted this name of hope over this work of destruction. This was a symbol of the plan that you already had traced for the reconstruction of the overthrown edifice!"<sup>46</sup>

### Napoleon and God's "merciful plan for reconstruction"

According to Étienne, as the five years of revolutionary terror passed and calm finally settled over France, everyone felt "a need for order."<sup>47</sup> At the Consulate's head was a man who "though he was young, possessed an incomparable military talent that had brought him glory in the Republic's defense...and who had a personal determination that no obstacle could stop."<sup>48</sup> This was a "man whose military talents were rooted in a superior human spirit capable of formulating grand ideas."<sup>49</sup> This man of destiny and "genius," as anyone could easily have guessed, was Napoleon Bonaparte. In Étienne's view, Bonaparte sought "absolute power" so he could "undertake the task of averting the revolutionary chariot from its disastrous course and force it again to follow the right road of order and reason." In addition, he wanted to give "democratic ideas a direction that would reestablish social order in the postrevolutionary era, ideas that all the nations of Europe and the entire world subse-

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<sup>44</sup> Genesis 1: 2.

<sup>45</sup> Étienne, *Discours*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Romans 11: 33. *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 8.

<sup>48</sup> With a coup d'état on 9 November 1799 (18 Brumaire), Bonaparte abolished the Directory and established the Consulate, with himself as "First Consul."

<sup>49</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 8.

quently adopted."<sup>50</sup>

Napoleon's destiny was to serve as the "dawning light promising a bright new day filled with hope for the transformation of France and for its future."<sup>51</sup> God used Napoleon's genius to reopen "the original pure source of the waters of Charity."<sup>52</sup> These waters "were then channeled to flow into the river of democracy to sweeten its bitterness, to cleanse it of its pestilential elements, and thus to transform it into a source of health and life for all people."<sup>53</sup> Étienne was right about one thing in his interpretation of Napoleon; the emperor did intend to restore French Catholicism and the Double Family. Bonaparte had the "twin aims of reestablishing religious peace and making the Church serve the State."<sup>54</sup> This restoration recognized the utility of the Church, the Lazarists, and the Daughters of Charity as "docile administrative tools." These tools would help him achieve his goals throughout the empire. Napoleon remarked, "You will see what use I shall be able to make of the clergy."<sup>55</sup>

As John Carven, C.M. has pointed out, "Just as the Church in France was dependent on the Emperor as a result of the Concordat and the Organic Articles, so too the Lazarists found themselves intimately related to and dependent on the Emperor for their reestablishment and the various aspects of their history between 1804 and 1809."<sup>56</sup>

According to Étienne, Bonaparte began the fulfillment of his great religious destiny in the year 1800. It was then that he approved the reestablishment of the Daughters of Charity. This took place even before he had arranged for the reestablishment of relations with the Holy See through the 1801 Concordat.<sup>57</sup> The sisters established their

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Étienne, *Discours*, 16.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 1: 136.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 1: 142-43.

<sup>56</sup> John W. Carven, C.M., *Napoleon and the Lazarists* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

<sup>57</sup> The decree of 22 December 1800 was issued by the Minister of the Interior, Jean-Antoine Chaptal, and justified the reestablishment with the following considerations:

Considering that the assistance needed by the sick can only be assiduously administered by persons who are vowed to hospital service and directed with enthusiasm by charity. Considering that among all the hospitals in the Republic those which are administered with the greatest care, intelligence, and economy are those which are staffed by the former members of this sublime institution which had for its sole end the practice without limits of all acts of charity. Considering that there are only a few living former members of this precious association, who are now growing older, we fear the extinction of an institution which is such an honor to humanity. Considering that the skills and virtues necessary to serve the poor must be inspired by example and taught by practical daily lessons....It is therefore ordered.

headquarters in Paris, in a house provided by the government on the rue du Vieux-Colombier. They also received an annual subsidy of 25,000 francs. On 16 October 1802 Bonaparte, as First Consul, extended the original ministerial decree reestablishing the sisters. The sisters were placed under the jurisdiction of the local bishops. They also were forbidden to correspond with any foreign superiors. With the sisters' legal reestablishment, for the first time, some hope existed for the Lazarists' reestablishment. In his compressed mythic account Étienne made tremendous historical leaps from the act restoring the Daughters of Charity in 1800, to the 1801 Concordat, to the Congregation's restoration, and to Napoleon's coronation in December of 1804. For example, in describing the journey of Pius VII to Paris, Étienne leapt directly to the incorrect statement that the pope "already had solicited and obtained the restoration of Saint Vincent's work...that had taken place by virtue of the decree of 27 May 1804."<sup>58</sup> The May decree did restore the Congregation, but this action was not the result of any request or activity by the Holy See. Such leaps by Étienne necessarily left great gaps. Filling these and other gaps in his *Notice* will show the entire course of events around which, or in spite of which, he formed his creation myth.

In September 1792, the Congregation's destiny in France seemed settled. After fleeing Paris the superior general, Félix Cayla de la Garde, eventually had found refuge in Flanders. For many months thereafter, there was no news of his whereabouts or of his fate. The missionaries and the Daughters of Charity outside France were without a general superior. Given this extraordinary breakdown of the Congregation's government, Pius VI intervened in June 1793. The pontiff named Benedetto Fenaja, the visitor of the Roman Province, as vicar apostolic of the Congregation.<sup>59</sup>

Within a month of the papal action, a letter from Cayla de la Garde, dated 24 July and written from Ieper, finally reached Rome. This was the first indication that anyone had received that the superior general was even still alive. Fenaja wrote to the general urging him to take refuge in Italy. Apparently, the superior general never received this letter. On 13 September, Fenaja received another letter from Cayla de la Garde, who was then in Tournai. The general said that he had read about the papal action naming him (Fenaja) as vicar apostolic. He welcomed this move though he acknowledged he still

<sup>58</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 3. Étienne had also stated this in his 1864 speech. See *Discours*, 16.

<sup>59</sup> See *Acta Apostolica*, 173-74.

was unaware of its exact terms. Cayla de la Garde promised to decide about coming to Italy by the end of September.<sup>60</sup>

At the beginning of December 1793, Fenaja received another letter from the general written from Mannheim in the Palatinate. Cayla de la Garde said that he felt able to resume his authority as of the new year. Accordingly, Fenaja requested the Holy See to end his commission.<sup>61</sup> On 1 January 1794, Cayla de la Garde issued his first circular letter in two years. He explained optimistically that "my new location affords me all the faculties that I need to again undertake the Congregation's government."<sup>62</sup> In March, however, the Holy See "invited" the general to take up residence in Rome.<sup>63</sup> When he finally arrived, he lived at the church of San Andrea across from the papal Quirinal palace.<sup>64</sup>

From his Roman exile Cayla de la Garde governed, or tried to govern, the remnants of the Congregation outside France. This task was virtually impossible because of the Napoleonic invasions of Italy and Spain, the declaration of the various Italian republics including that of Rome, the final partition of Poland, persecution in Prussia, and persecution in the French missions abroad.<sup>65</sup> Having witnessed the Congregation's destruction in many parts of Europe, and its threatened destruction elsewhere, Cayla de la Garde died in Rome on 12 February 1800.

On the following day François-Florentin Brunet, who was the first assistant and the only assistant residing with the general, called a meeting

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<sup>60</sup> Stella, *Italia*, 398.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>62</sup> Cayla de la Garde, *Circulaires*, 2: 245. The superior general chose the wording of the circular letter very carefully. There was some level of tension and misunderstanding over the issue. For example, Cayla de la Garde thanked the pope effusively for his "tender solicitude" in naming a vicar apostolic to govern the Congregation until the superior general was "again free to take up his responsibilities." Fenaja also was thanked effusively for having "fulfilled the wishes of His Holiness." Cayla de la Garde even noted that if it had not been for his own "rigorous sense of duty," he would have had no qualms in allowing Fenaja to continue. Having said this, the general then noted, "I have written to M. Fenaja asking him to write to you on his part in order to avoid the least shadow of misunderstanding, so that the business of the Congregation can return to normal and suffer no disruption from the new order of things."

<sup>63</sup> In his first circular issued from Rome on 1 January 1795, the superior general had this to say about the papal invitation: "It has been a long time since our Holy Father the Pope first invited me to accept asylum in his States. Until now the circumstances did not permit me to profit from an offer which was both honorable and attractive." See *ibid.*, 2: 248.

<sup>64</sup> Not surprisingly, when Cayla de la Garde finally settled in Rome he looked for a location other than that of the Roman province's headquarters of Monte Citorio to establish his residence. This was regarded as a snub by the local Lazarists.

<sup>65</sup> In his circular of 1 January 1798, the superior general reflected on the events that were then unfolding in Europe: "I had hoped at least to be able to tell you that the present day promised, if not happier times then, at least the dawn of a future that would be less disastrous. This false hope has been dissipated like a dream. We are again experiencing new horrors. The hand of the Lord has struck us hard again. The Church's suffering has reached an alarming point. The Congregation's losses have multiplied, and we can foresee no other remedy than the Lord's infinite mercies." See Cayla de la Garde, *Circulaires*, 2: 263.

at the Roman provincial house at Monte Citorio.<sup>66</sup> Brunet informed the gathered priests that Cayla de la Garde's written nomination of a vicar general could not be found. He claimed that according to the *Constitutiones Selectae*, he as the first assistant now rightfully succeeded as vicar general.<sup>67</sup> Brunet said he would hold this office until a general assembly elected a new superior general.<sup>68</sup> Much to Brunet's surprise, his claim met significant opposition. The resistance was led by the superior of Monte Citorio, Leonardo Ippoliti. The Romans gave two reasons for their stance: the first was their claim that the constitutions had no provisions that applied to the extraordinary circumstances that the Congregation then was experiencing;<sup>69</sup> secondly, they cited a decree of Pius VI depriving French religious of their active and passive voices in the houses where they were living in exile.<sup>70</sup> Brunet appealed to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for recognition. Benedetto Fenaja lent his support to the Frenchman's cause. Brunet also appealed to the French Cardinal, Jean-Siffrein Maury, who was living in exile in Rome.<sup>71</sup> He told the prelate that the Roman opposition desired "to remove the French entirely from the Congregation's government."<sup>72</sup> On 17 May 1800, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars recognized Brunet as vicar general. The pope confirmed this decision.<sup>73</sup> Brunet named Carlo Domenico Sicardi and Fenaja as his assistants.<sup>74</sup> A month later, Cayla de la Garde's nomination of Brunet as vicar general was found.<sup>75</sup> The old antagonisms between the Romans and the French proved again not to be far from the surface. Meanwhile, however, events were beginning to take place in France that absorbed the full attention of Brunet and the other French Lazarists.

With the reestablishment of the Daughters of Charity, the government agreed to the appointment of two former Lazarists to serve as chaplains at their mother house in Paris. One of these chaplains, Claude-Joseph Placiard, together with another former Lazarist, Jean-

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<sup>66</sup> Of the other three prerevolutionary assistants general, Edward Ferris had returned to his native Ireland, Alexis Pertuisot had died in Paris in 1798, and the Italian assistant, Carlo Domenico Sicardi, was living in his home region of Piedmont.

<sup>67</sup> CS, 132-33.

<sup>68</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Brunet see *Circulaires*, 2: 268-70.

<sup>69</sup> *Constitutiones*, 24.

<sup>70</sup> Stella, *Italia*, 469.

<sup>71</sup> Maury had been a clerical delegate to the Estates General where he emerged as a conservative spokesman. He opposed the secularization of the Church's goods and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Maury later became a strong supporter of Napoleon and his religious policies.

<sup>72</sup> Brunet to Maury, 22 February 1800, *Dossier: Brunet*, Casier 38, H 1°, 150, ACMP.

<sup>73</sup> For text see *Circulaires*, 2: 623.

<sup>74</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Sicardi see *Circulaires*, 2: 306-07.

<sup>75</sup> Stella, *Italia*, 469.

Jacques Dubois, began to work for the Congregation's legal restoration. Placiard and Dubois had an ally in their friend Joseph-Marie Portalis, who was Napoleon's Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs.<sup>76</sup> Also giving his support to this effort was the abbé Paul d'Astros, who was Portalis' nephew and aide.<sup>77</sup>

Those who were working for the Congregation's reestablishment agreed on a common strategy. The justification that they presented to the emperor for the Lazarists' restoration was their utility to the state both as directors of the Daughters of Charity, and as missionaries preserving French influence in the Levant and China.<sup>78</sup> In a letter addressed to the archbishop of Paris on 28 August 1802, Napoleon acknowledged these overtures. "Let me respond to the different requests concerning the Sisters of Charity. My intention is to restore all their previous prerogatives to these good daughters so that they can continue to do their good work....I have also read with the greatest attention the note that you have sent me concerning the mission in China. I understand its importance. I would like you to report on the location and activities of our missionaries and make suggestions about what can be done to make their zeal useful to Religion and the State."<sup>79</sup>

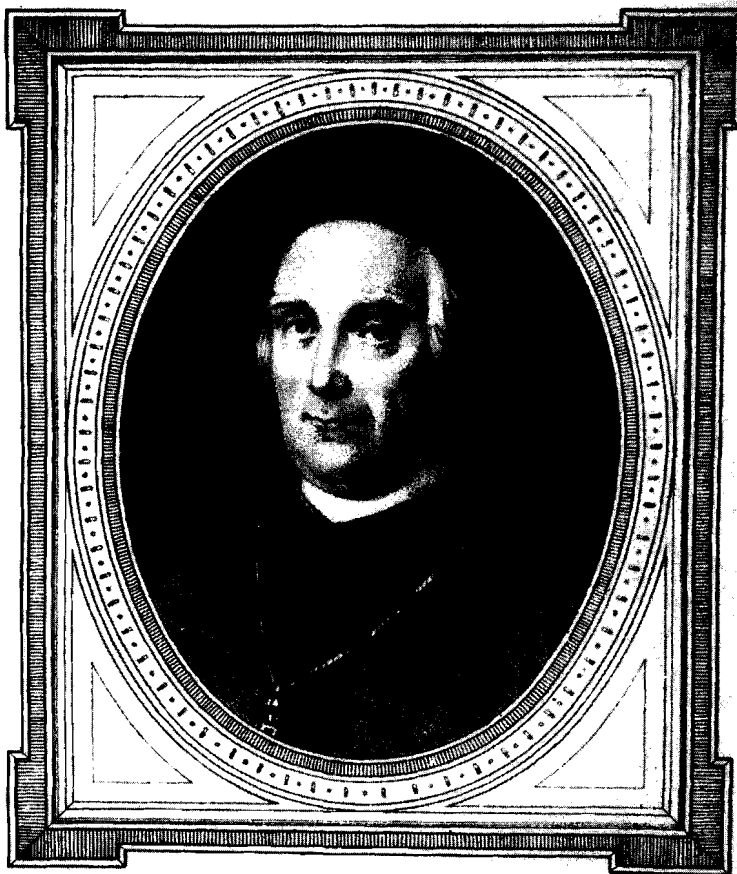
This news reached Brunet in Rome, though he read more into Bonaparte's initial reactions than was there. For example, he informed a correspondent in the Roman Curia that "Napoleon sees no obstacle in having the Daughters of Charity reestablished 'entirely on their ancient foundations including their direction by the Lazarists.'" He also quoted Bonaparte as having said, "if nothing about the Institute of the Lazarists conflicts with existing laws, he would gladly agree to

<sup>76</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xi.

<sup>77</sup> D'Astros (1772-1851) helped negotiate the 1801 concordat with the Holy See. He also edited the Imperial Catechism but fell afoul of Napoleon and was imprisoned from 1810 to 1814. He became bishop of Bayonne in 1820, archbishop of Toulouse in 1830, and a cardinal in 1850. See *Grand Larousse Encyclopédique*, 1: 675.

<sup>78</sup> According to Gabriel Perboyre, C.M., a mythic obsession for Étienne was that the 1780s substitution of French Lazarists in the former French Jesuit missions in China and the Levant and the survival of these missions throughout the revolutionary period was part of God's providential planning. In Étienne's mind, these missions which the Congregation had only accepted with great reluctance under Antoine Jacquier, proved to be not only the foundation for the Congregation's restoration but also its great nineteenth-century missionary destinies. See Gabriel Perboyre, C.M., undated and unpublished 13 pg. ms. in ACMP entitled, *Notes sur la notice ou mémoire de M. Étienne publié le 4 août 1870 relatif au rétablissement de la Congrégation de la Mission en France*. Perboyre, who died in 1880, was the foremost Vincentian historian of the nineteenth century. For a history of the China missions in this period see Octave Ferreux, C.M., "Histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission en Chine: 1699-1950," *Annales* 127 (1963): 80-93. For the history of the Levantine missions in this period see Pierre Corckett, C.M., *Les Lazaristes et les Filles de la Charité au Proche-Orient* (Beyrouth: Congrégation de la Mission, 1983), 47-74.

<sup>79</sup> *La Correspondance de Napoléon I* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1861), 8: 10.



*M.<sup>r</sup> Fenaja, Benoît.*  
*Vicaire apostolique.*  
*Nommé le 25 Juin 1793 jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 1795.*

*Benedetto G. Fenaja, C.M., Italian vicar apostolic, 1793-1795*

their reestablishment, especially because of his interest in the overseas missions."<sup>80</sup> The abbé d'Astros requested a report from Brunet on the Lazarists.

The vicar general responded immediately. He pointed out that the Daughters of Charity "could not long conserve their uniform spirit that makes them so precious to suffering humanity" unless they were again subject to their natural guide: the superior general of the Lazarists.<sup>81</sup> He reminded the government of the past services of the Lazarists in the foreign missions and noted that "foreigners who well understand the advantages of having missionaries in these areas are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to fill these positions with their own subjects."<sup>82</sup> The vicar general pointed out that "meanwhile, the position of the general of the Lazarists remains vacant, and it cannot be much longer before it is filled. If the Lazarists remain without a house in France, it will be impossible that the next general will be French."<sup>83</sup>

Bonaparte directed Portalis to study the question of the foreign missions. On 7 November 1802, the minister submitted a report concluding that "the government must continue to support and encourage the foreign missions."<sup>84</sup> He pointed out that before the Revolution the government had confided the care of the foreign missions primarily to the Lazarists and the Society of the Foreign Missions of France. He further reported that while "these establishments had disappeared with all the other ecclesiastical corporations...happily some of those who had been members and/or leaders had survived."<sup>85</sup>

Portalis then presented a plan for the Lazarists' restoration. The plan's author was Jean-Jacques Dubois. Dubois suggested that in order to safeguard the French missions the government name him "Agent Général des Missions de saint Vincent de Paul." His responsibility would be "to watch over the missionaries' interests and to assure the necessary means for their success." He cited two specific tasks he would undertake. The first would be "to forward to the missionaries, especially those in China, the latest European discoveries in the sciences and the arts." He correctly observed that "This information alone can secure French influence and

<sup>80</sup> Letter of Brunet cited in *Actes du Gouvernement*, xii.

<sup>81</sup> *Projet de mémoire envoyé de Rome par M. Brunet à M. Placard, pour être présenté au Ministre des Cultes en 1802, à fin de obtenir le rétablissement des Prêtres séculiers connus sous le nom de Lazaristes*, Serie II, "Vicaires-Généraux, registre intitulé, "Extraits, minutes, ou précis, 1800-1809," 17, ACMP.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Rapports de Portalis, Conseiller d'État chargé de toutes les affaires concernant les cultes, sur les missions étrangères, et projets d'arrêtés concernant le rétablissement des Lazaristes*, AN.F.4.1044.4.24-25.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*



the influence of French missionaries in the vast Chinese empire." His second task would be to recruit missionaries to replace those who had died over the previous ten years. Dubois recommended that the government provide free passage for mail and missionaries. He also noted the need for a house in Paris to serve as a headquarters and as a place to train young missionaries. Portalis pointed out the moderate nature of these requests and how economical they would be to carry out.<sup>86</sup>

In a report given to Bonaparte on 24 December 1802,<sup>87</sup> Portalis noted that it was the "ambition" of the Roman Congregation of Propaganda Fide "to govern and exclusively direct the foreign missions."<sup>88</sup> The minister also pointed out that "the French missionaries who belonged to the Congregation of Saint Vincent de Paul had in the past never depended on Propaganda for anything other than their purely spiritual powers."<sup>89</sup> For all the rest, they had "remained under the eyes and under the hand of their sovereign."<sup>90</sup> Portalis raised the specter of English and Portuguese attempts to undermine the influence of the French missionaries, and thus of France, in China. Brunet, who was following the situation closely, believed that some form of restoration was imminent. He unrealistically hoped to depart for France by Easter of 1803.<sup>91</sup> On 18 March 1803, Portalis submitted another report to Bonaparte. "I have already had the honor of presenting to you a report on the institution of the secular priests, called of the Mission or Lazarists...and you have recognized the possible utility of this establishment for the Government, Religion, and Commerce. I will now, Citizen First Consul, tell you of some recent developments and propose the possible means for reorganizing this Institution to serve the foreign missions."<sup>92</sup>

What is striking in this report is the presumption that the question was now no longer whether the government would restore the Lazarists but rather under what conditions and at what costs.<sup>93</sup> On 7 April 1803,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> At the end of November, the Lazarist superior of the Levantine missions, Pierre-François Viguier returned to Paris as Brunet's representative. He was to help lobby for the Congregation's restoration.

<sup>88</sup> *Rapport (du 3 nivôse an XI, 24 décembre 1802) présenté au premier Consul par le Conseiller d'État chargé de toutes les affaires concernant les Cultes, sur les missions étrangères*, AN.F4.1044.3.34.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Brunet to M. Vicherat, 19 March 1803, quoted in *Actes du Gouvernement*, xv.

<sup>92</sup> *Rapport présenté au Gouvernement de la République par le Conseiller d'État chargé de toutes les affaires concernant les Cultes*, AN.F4.1044.3.66-67.

<sup>93</sup> There is an interesting paragraph in Portalis's report which indicates that a question had been raised whether the reestablishment of the Lazarists also meant the recognition of some of their other prerevolutionary ministries. Portalis clearly states, "In the past the missionaries were employed in the interior of France to preach, teach, and encourage the practice of penitence. There is no question of reestablishing this part of their ministry. . . ." Ibid.

Bonaparte forwarded Portalis's report to the Ministry of the Interior. He requested that the minister give his own recommendations "as soon as possible."<sup>94</sup> At this point, progress on the question ground almost to a complete halt. Meanwhile, Bonaparte's uncle, Cardinal Joseph Fesch, went to Rome as ambassador. Fesch met with Brunet and promised his support. However, he also cautioned that as long as the war with England continued there would be no hope for either a restoration or monetary assistance.

At the end of 1803, the Council of State received two recommendations regarding the Lazarists.<sup>95</sup> Both agreed that "the secular priests known under the name of Missionaries or Lazarists will continue to administer the missions outside France."<sup>96</sup> One proposal came from Portalis and the other from the Interior ministry. Despite these two positive recommendations, the council took no action because of the English war.

Pierre Viguiet was now Brunet's agent in negotiating with the government to restore the Lazarists.<sup>97</sup> In April 1804, he tried a desperate measure to "accelerate the decisive moment." He applied to the foreign ministry, asking for a passport that would allow his departure to Rome.<sup>98</sup> The reasons he gave for wanting to leave France were his inability to support himself and his desire "to find among the Priests of the Mission an assured existence and occupations relative to my state."<sup>99</sup> Viguiet felt that if the government refused his request this would at least be an indication that it "sincerely desired our eventual reestablishment."<sup>100</sup>

Viguiet's request had to be approved by the Minister of Cults. The Comte d'Hauterive of the ministry told Viguiet that Talleyrand, the foreign minister, favored the immediate reestablishment of the

<sup>94</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xvi. That same fall, Portalis presented an emergency request to Napoleon to approve funds to support the Lazarist missionaries at Aleppo (Syria). Portalis noted, "Since circumstances have forced you, Citizen First Consul, to suspend the implementation of the measures that I have had the honor to propose to you for the reestablishment of the foreign missions, and while awaiting the first opportunity to again take up this project...I have the honor of proposing to you that...the missionaries at Aleppo be accorded 2,000 francs for their most urgent needs." Significantly, Bonaparte responded by approving the request and even doubling the amount to be granted. See AN.F4.607.60.

<sup>95</sup> The Council of State was a high administrative advisory council dating from Napoleon I and maintained through the Restoration and July Monarchy. See *Historical Dictionary of France from the 1815 Restoration to the Second Empire*, Edgar Leon Newman, ed., 2 vols. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987), 1: 268-70.

<sup>96</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xvi.

<sup>97</sup> Brunet opposed Dubois's attempts to position himself at the head of a restoration.

<sup>98</sup> Viguiet to M. Pein, 30 April 1804. This letter was attached to the report presented to the Council of State by Portalis for the restoration of the Lazarists. See *Actes du Gouvernement*, 75.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Viguiet to M. l'abbé Jauffret, 27 February 1805, *Vicaires Généraux*, 23, ACMP.

Lazarists.<sup>101</sup> Viguiet decided upon a change in strategy: he would request either a passport to Rome, a subsidy that would allow him to remain in Paris, or an act of reestablishment. On 30 April 1804, he submitted these choices to Portalis. On 9 May, Portalis forwarded the request to Bonaparte for his urgent consideration.

This behind-the-scenes-maneuvering did have the desired effect of bringing the negotiations to a head. The Council of State agreed to confide the French foreign missions to "one secular association," the Lazarists.<sup>102</sup> On 22 May 1804, it approved the terms of the restoration. Five days later, Napoleon signed the decree.<sup>103</sup> Two days after this, Viguiet met with Pein de Villefranche of the Ministry of Cults. He then learned that he would receive a copy of the reestablishment decree. After quickly consulting with the other Lazarists in Paris, he told the government that the Congregation would accept its terms. Brunet had already given Viguiet authority to accept whatever terms the government eventually might offer.<sup>104</sup>

When Viguiet saw the terms of the restoration, he realized that they would be problematic. He also realized that the community had no choice but to accept them and hope that it could work out any difficulties.<sup>105</sup> The biggest problem posed by the decree was that it did not restore the Congregation by name. It merely stated that "An association of secular priests, who, under the title of priests of the Foreign Missions, will administer the missions outside France."<sup>106</sup> This wording is different from that found in the drafts of the decree that had specified: "The secular priests known under the name of Missionaries or Lazarists will administer the missions outside France."<sup>107</sup> Étienne correctly observed that "There was nothing in the decree that suggested it applied to the Congregation of the Mission...it could only infer its legal existence through subsequent governmental acts invoking the decree."<sup>108</sup> He had

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<sup>101</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xviii.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* Alexandre de Lanautte, Comte d'Hauterive

<sup>103</sup> The Senate proclaimed Napoleon as Emperor of the French on 18 May 1804.

<sup>104</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xviii.

<sup>105</sup> One difficulty had to do with the decree's second article that stated: "The Emperor will name the director of the Foreign Missions." The French Lazarists knew that this provision was in violation of the constitutions and would never be acceptable to the foreign provinces or to the Holy See. However, the government assured Viguiet that "The nomination of your Director by the Emperor should be understood in the sense that His Majesty would confirm the choice of a director made by the Missionaries themselves." This interpretation proved to be valid, as the emperor subsequently confirmed the next three vicars general selected by the French. See *ibid.*, xvii, 76.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>108</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 9. Étienne inaccurately quoted the text of the decree in this way: "There will be a Society of Priests, charged with preparing and furnishing Missionaries to serve the French Missions of the Levant and China."

a plausible explanation for this omission: "During this epoch a revolutionary and antireligious spirit still dominated many men in the government. The very words 'Mission' or 'Congregation' alarmed them, and if these words had appeared in the decree it would have encountered an invincible opposition.<sup>109</sup> It was therefore necessary to dissimulate by using terms that they would accept."<sup>110</sup>

### Italian Resistance: Carlo Domenico Sicardi

Whatever the government's reasons, many former French Lazarists questioned whether the ancient Congregation was restored. The foreign provinces, especially the Italians, asked the same question. No such doubt, however, existed in the minds of the French Lazarists who had negotiated the restoration. These men received assurances that the government's intention was a restoration.

In July 1804, Brunet reported his recall by the French government.<sup>111</sup> He put his affairs in order and prepared for the end of his long exile. His decision to leave Rome caused consternation among the Roman Lazarists.<sup>112</sup> His Italian assistants, Carlo Domenico Sicardi and Benedetto Fenaja, refused to accompany him to Paris. They also refused to resign so that he could appoint new assistants. Since Brunet could not govern without them, an impasse occurred. The vicar general proposed that he inform the visitors that in the event they could not communicate with him in Paris they would have delegated authority. They then could deal with any situation that normally required action by the superior or vicar general. The Romans, however, began to work toward a very different settlement from the one Brunet envisioned.

On 31 October 1804, Brunet departed for Paris in a coach provided by Cardinal Fesch.<sup>113</sup> He was making his final preparations to leave when the Roman Lazarists led by Sicardi made their move. They secretly approached the Holy See, charging that Brunet could not govern the international community from Paris.<sup>114</sup> On the day before

<sup>109</sup> At this time, a strong Jacobin sentiment existed among some members of the Council of State. These members opposed Napoleon's reconciliation with the papacy and his favor toward the Catholic Church. See Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 1: 205.

<sup>110</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 9.

<sup>111</sup> Brunet to Jean-Claude Vicherat, C.M., 4 July 1804, *M. Brunet: Vicaire Général (1800-07)*, Casier 38, H 1°, 379, ACMP.

<sup>112</sup> Stella, *Italia*, 470.

<sup>113</sup> For more information see André Latreille, *Napoléon et le Saint-Siège (1801-1808), l'ambassade du Cardinal Fesch à Rome* (Paris: Libraire Félix Alcan, 1955).

<sup>114</sup> See letter of 21 October, from Sicardi to Fenaja. *Brunet*, 381, ACMP. At this point Fenaja, whose influence at the Vatican was great, was also an archbishop and the pope's vice regent for Rome.

Brunet left Rome, the Holy See issued the brief *Cum uti accepimus*.<sup>115</sup> This act limited Brunet's jurisdiction as vicar general to the Daughters of Charity, the Congregation in France, and the French foreign missions.<sup>116</sup> The pope named Sicardi vicar general for the Congregation outside France. Brunet would not learn of this action until after he had arrived back in France. On 25 November, Sicardi issued a circular letter to the visitors informing them of his appointment.<sup>117</sup> He issued another circular on New Year's day 1805 in which he claimed that the Congregation as restored in France, for the sole purpose of serving the foreign missions, could not be considered as the true Congregation of the Mission.<sup>118</sup> Schism between the French and the non-French provinces was now a fact.

While visiting France, Pius VII took the opportunity to successfully lobby Napoleon on behalf of the French Lazarists.<sup>119</sup> He asked that they be allowed to resume their former ministries of rural missions and the direction of diocesan seminaries.<sup>120</sup> By March 1805, the climate in France had changed sufficiently<sup>121</sup> so that official documents could again refer to the community as the Lazarists.<sup>122</sup>

On 21 June, Brunet wrote to the Holy See asking for the restoration of his jurisdiction. He contested the Roman claim that he had left Italy without making adequate provisions for the Congregation's governance.<sup>123</sup> Brunet asked for permission to name new assistants who would reside with him in Paris. He also asked for the extraordinary faculty of naming his successor as vicar general. To placate the Italians, Brunet said that he

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<sup>115</sup> Upon arriving in Paris, Brunet took up residence with the Daughters of Charity at their temporary mother house on the rue du Vieux-Colombier in the parish of Saint-Sulpice. The French vicars general continued to reside there until the Napoleonic suppression.

<sup>116</sup> *Acta Apostolica*, 175-76.

<sup>117</sup> Sicardi, *Circulaires*, 2: 307-08.

<sup>118</sup> Brunet, 392, ACMP.

<sup>119</sup> Pius VII was unable to obtain from Napoleon the suppression of the Organic Articles attached to the 1801 Concordat, the abolition of the divorce law, the obligatory observance of Sunday, the restoration of the religious orders, or the restitution of the annexed papal lands in France. What he was able to obtain in negotiations with the new emperor were the submission of the constitutional bishops, the authorization of the missionary congregations and the socially useful sisters, the restoration of the Gregorian calendar, and the subsequent expansion of the budget of the Ministry of Cults from 1,200,000 francs to 17,000,000. See Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 1: 208.

<sup>120</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xx.

<sup>121</sup> This reflects the success of Napoleon's plan to unite altar and empire and thus to strengthen France through "the fusion of parties and the reconciliation of the Revolution with religion." As the emperor pointed out to the Council of State, "anything which tends to render sacred the one who governs is of great advantage." Cited by Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 1: 205.

<sup>122</sup> For example, on 27 March 1805, Cardinal Fesch appointed "M. Brunet, vicaire-général des Prêtres Lazaristes" to his advisory council as Grand Aumônier de l'Empire. See "Arrêté du cardinal Fesch: création d'un conseil de la Grand Aumônière," Brunet, 395, ACMP.

<sup>123</sup> Brunet pointed out that the brief had been issued before he even had left Rome. He also claimed that the Italians had known and previously agreed to his plan to delegate authority to the visitors.

would be willing to have Sicardi serve as pro-vicar general, but only under his direct authority. He cautioned the Holy See that the division threatened the Congregation's reestablishment in France.<sup>124</sup>

Brunet's letter accompanied a memorandum from Cardinal Fesch to the papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Ercole Consalvi. Fesch certified that the "Congregation of the Mission has been completely reestablished as it existed before the Revolution."<sup>125</sup> At this time, Fesch also entered the fray supporting the French Lazarists and Brunet.

This is not an affair that solely concerns M. Brunet. This issue is important to the French government, and to the future of the foreign missions. The undersigned states that...the French government will never allow the Congregation to be reestablished fully in France except on the basis that it existed before the revolution. The consequence of Rome's making any changes will be to paralyze the congregation from accomplishing its mission. Rome, by removing the head of this mission from France, has changed its primitive rules, and thus has changed the nature of the institution itself. This must affect how the government views the Congregation. In the second place, this change has prevented the unity of action by which the Congregation of the Mission of Saint Vincent de Paul will again flourish. How can the French superior function effectively when he has jurisdiction only over the missionaries of this Empire and its foreign missions? How can the missionaries of this Empire be united with the missionaries of Italy and Spain since these groups recognize two different heads? It necessarily follows that the Court of Rome must reattach to the Mission of France, which is the principal and mother of all the missions in other countries, the general power that is its due. These reasons, and many others that cannot be ignored, have convinced the undersigned that His Holiness should favorably consider the request of M. Brunet and recognize his rights. This act will greatly encourage the restored community in Paris to concentrate all its efforts to make an institution flourish that is so honorable and so useful to the universal Church.<sup>126</sup>

Later in September, at the request of Fesch, Bonaparte issued the required confirmation of Brunet as "Superior of the Mission, known under the title of Saint-Lazare."<sup>127</sup>

The barrage of letters between Paris and Rome continued through the fall of 1805. In November, the Holy See took a half-step toward meeting the French demands when it conceded to Brunet the title of

<sup>124</sup> 21 June 1805, "Mémoire de M. Brunet au Pape," *Brunet*, 408, ACMP.

<sup>125</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, xxii.

<sup>126</sup> Cardinal Fesch to Cardinal Consalvi, 21 June 1805, *Brunet*, 407, ACMP.

<sup>127</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, 84-85.

vicar general and the right to choose new assistants. It did not, however, concede him the right to name a successor. Sicardi was to continue as pro-vicar general in Rome, nominally under Brunet's authority. The French Lazarists and Cardinal Fesch expressed their dissatisfaction with this settlement.

On 22 November, Fesch wrote a letter to Consalvi again attacking Sicardi's persistent contention that the French restoration was dubious.<sup>128</sup> He argued that the government was doing all that it could to restore the Congregation as it had existed before the revolution. Fesch again requested that the Holy See do its part by recognizing Brunet's full authority as vicar general. This recognition would anticipate the speedy convocation of a general assembly, and the return to the community's regular constitutional government.<sup>129</sup> In the minds of the French Lazarists and the imperial government, the return to regular constitutional government meant a return to Gallican control over the international Congregation.<sup>130</sup>

Over the next several years, since it played a useful part in carrying out Napoleon's religious policies, the Congregation enjoyed the government's full support. During these years, the government tried repeatedly, if unsuccessfully, to find an appropriate building in Paris to serve as the community's new mother house,<sup>131</sup> it supported the Lazarist missions in China, in the Levant, and in Algeria,<sup>132</sup> it ap-

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<sup>128</sup> Cardinal Fesch to Brunet, 23 November 1805, communicating the response he received from Cardinal Consalvi, and his subsequent reply, *Brunet*, 440, 461, *ACMP*.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* 125.

<sup>130</sup> On 26 March 1805, Portalis, wrote to the emperor concerning placing the newly restored communities under the direction of the Grand Aumônier de l'Empire:

Your Majesty is about to reestablish the Society of Foreign Missions and of the Holy Spirit. By a previous decree, you already have reestablished the priests known under the name of the Lazarists. It is important that these diverse establishments be directed in a regular manner, to enable them to be able worthily to fulfill their functions. In previous times, a superior general governed the affairs of these groups, and this superior was a Frenchman. Since the Revolution, foreign superiors living in Rome have taken control over those matters relating to the missions. It is in the interests of the government that things return to their previous state and that our missions be directed by a national superior.

AN.F4.964.64.

<sup>131</sup> See for example, "15 mars 1805-Décret de Napoléon I, maintenant le lycée Charlemagne dans la maison des Jésuits et demandant un rapport sur le transfert du séminaire des Lazaristes aux Minimes," *Actes du Gouvernement*, 88-90.

<sup>132</sup> See for example, "28 mars 1805-Décision de Napoléon I approuvant l'envoi en Chine de trois Missionnaires Lazaristes," *ibid.*, 83-84, "31 juillet 1806-Décision de Napoléon I, accordant un secours à la Mission d'Alger," *ibid.*, 93, "12 juillet 1808-Décret de Napoléon I, fixant des Indemnités des allocations aux missions...des Lazaristes dans le Levant," *ibid.*, 103-04.

proved funds for the offering of parochial missions,<sup>133</sup> it authorized the Congregation to accept the administration of several colleges and seminaries,<sup>134</sup> it encouraged the French bishops to allow former Lazarists who were incardinated in their dioceses to return, it allowed the Congregation to receive donations and legacies,<sup>135</sup> and it provided an annual subsidy of 15,000 francs.<sup>136</sup>

Just as importantly, the government's support of the Lazarists extended to the French-controlled areas of Italy,<sup>137</sup> Spain, and Portugal.<sup>138</sup> During 1806, Napoleon put the Lazarist houses at Piacenza, Genoa, and Savona under French protection.<sup>139</sup> The government's position was that all Lazarist houses in imperial territories that were under the jurisdiction of the French vicar general would be considered as French houses.<sup>140</sup> It became difficult for Sicardi and the Italians to maintain that the Congregation did not really exist in France. Yet, despite this overwhelming evidence, and undoubtedly because of it, the Italians and the Holy See continued to resist the return of Gallican domination. This resistance by Rome was part of its general resistance to

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<sup>133</sup> In March 1806, the Lazarists were preaching parish missions in the diocese of Poitiers. Gaspard Jauffret, Fesch's vicar general, wrote to Brunet:

You have shown zeal in fulfilling the wish of His Majesty, expressed to you by His Excellency the Minister of Cults, that your Company send missionaries to the diocese of Poitiers. This zeal and devotion will not be forgotten. We have taken care to inform His Excellency of this, and he certainly will express the same sentiments to His Majesty.

Now it is important that each of these respectable Missionaries be penetrated with the two essential objects of this mission. Their first object is to convert souls; the second, which is inseparable from the first, must be to destroy the prejudices that certain deceitful ecclesiastics have planted in the spirit of the people against the present pope and against our Emperor and King.

It can be said that your Company will be represented in this diocese by those whom you will send, and thus its spirit will be judged. In fulfillment of such a mission, there is nothing that is more important than that they bring a spirit of peace, mildness, conciliation, and the clear message to the people of respecting, cherishing, and loving the Government and the person of the Emperor Napoleon, and the authority of Pius VII...I will not end without observing that above all it is necessary for the missionaries to realize that not even their least words will escape public notice, and thus this will be a precious opportunity for such zealous Missionaries to express their gratitude toward the person of the Emperor who has reestablished your Company, and toward the Pope who requested this reestablishment.

"Extraits, minutes ou précis, 1800-09," 28, *ACMP*.

<sup>134</sup> These institutions were located at Amiens, Poitiers, Meximieux, Valfleury, Saint-Brieuc, Carcassonne, Vannes, Sarlat, Albi, Saint-Méen, and Bayeux. See *Actes du Gouvernement*, xxvi.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>136</sup> This was the sum provided for by article 9 of the restoration decree. *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>137</sup> See for example, letter of 17 March 1808, from Cardinal Fesch to the French Administrator General of the Kingdom of Etruria in Italy ordering the protection of the Lazarist Missionaries. See *Dossier de M. Hanon*, Casier 38, H 5°, *ACMP*.

<sup>138</sup> See for example, M. De Voisins to Hanon, 7 March 1808, promising protection for the Lazarists' houses in Portugal. *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, 88, 94-95.

<sup>140</sup> Bigot de Préameneu, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, to Dominique Hanon, vicar general, 15 February 1809. See *Hanon*, *ACMP*.



Napoleonic policies.

In his *Notice*, Étienne gave the most abbreviated account possible of the Italian-French schism in the century's opening years. His version, for example, did not mention papal support of the Italian Lazarists' resistance to restoring Gallican domination. He simply said that during this era the Holy See had reserved to itself the confirmation of the vicars general. This reservation was to last until the Congregation resumed its "normal state."<sup>141</sup> Étienne did go into more detail in describing the "intrigue the Italian Missionaries had hatched in Rome with the goal of installing...the seat of our two families in this capital of the world." According to Étienne, Sicardi led this new phase of an intrigue that the Italians "had pursued for over a century, and which providence had always prevented from being successful."<sup>142</sup>

On 13 May 1806, the Holy See issued yet another brief regarding the schism.<sup>143</sup> This document was only a temporary measure designed to restore some order while preparing for the long-awaited convocation of a general assembly. The pope recognized Brunet as vicar general. He granted him the faculty, for six months, of choosing his successor in case of his death. Sicardi was to serve in Rome as pro-vicar general. In this position, however, he would be subject to Brunet's authority.

Brunet also was to name four assistants. These nominations were subject to papal approval. The vicar general named Sicardi, Fenaja, and the Frenchmen Pierre Claude and Claude-Joseph Placiard. Sicardi immediately came forward with his own interpretation of the decree. He claimed that the Holy See's only intention had been to confirm Brunet's title as vicar general, but that as pro-vicar he was still to exercise the authority of this office.<sup>144</sup> Sicardi appealed to Rome to confirm his interpretation. In August 1806, he wrote a circular letter defending his interpretation of the May brief. He claimed that any acts of Brunet contrary to this understanding were null.<sup>145</sup>

On 1 September, Brunet wrote to Sicardi demanding that he comply with the true terms of the May brief. The French vicar general prohibited the assistants Sicardi had chosen from exercising

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<sup>141</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 10.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Acta Apostolica*, 176-78.

<sup>144</sup> Sicardi to an unknown correspondent, letter after May 1806, *Brunet*, 486, ACMP.

<sup>145</sup> "Protestations de M. Sicardi contre les prétentions de M. Brunet, qui s'arroe les fonctions de vicaire général," *ibid.*, 500.

their offices.<sup>146</sup> A few days later in Rome, Cardinal Consalvi issued a letter supporting Sicardi's interpretation. However, by the time this news reached Paris, Brunet was dead.<sup>147</sup>

As allowed by the May papal brief, Brunet left a sealed nomination of his successor as vicar general. After his death, the missionaries in Paris opened this letter. Brunet had named Claude-Joseph Placiard.<sup>148</sup> The French Lazarists subsequently nominated Placiard to serve as vicar general. Placiard wrote the government and the Holy See with the news and asked for their confirmation.<sup>149</sup> Within a matter of days he had received the emperor's consent;<sup>150</sup> papal approval was much slower in coming.

In Rome, Sicardi was lobbying to prevent any limitation of his powers by a papal confirmation of Placiard.<sup>151</sup> In early December, Placiard wrote to Cardinal Caraffa reporting on the state of the Congregation, and the favor being shown to it throughout the empire. He repeated his request that the Holy See recognize him as vicar general.<sup>152</sup> At the conclusion of his memorandum Placiard commented:

The perceived inconveniences in the prolongation of the vicariate general of the Congregation of the Mission for a Frenchman are nothing compared with those that would inevitably follow from the establishment of a new order of governance. The undersigned protests that while he will do nothing to invite governmental intervention, given the present state of ecclesiastical affairs, the Emperor of the French, the king of Italy, will not consent to having the missionaries residing in his imperial territories come under the jurisdiction of a vicar or pro-vicar general who also does not reside in these same territories. As soon as it would come to his attention that this was the case, our houses that he has so far protected would perish.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Brunet to Sicardi, 1 September 1806, *ibid.*, 507.

<sup>147</sup> Cardinal Consalvi to Brunet, 6 September 1806, *ibid.*, 516.

<sup>148</sup> For a short biographical sketch of Placiard see *Circulaires*, 2: 272-73.

<sup>149</sup> Placiard to Pius VII, 18 September 1806 and 19 September to the Minister of Cults. *Dossier: Placiard*, Casier 38, H 2°, ACMP.

<sup>150</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, 94.

<sup>151</sup> Sicardi to Pius VII, 19 November 1806. Sicardi asked that Placiard be named vicar general for only six months and only for the Daughters of Charity and the foreign missions. Sicardi also recommended against Placiard's being given the faculty to name his successor. *Placiard*, ACMP. See also Carven, *Napoleon*, 137.

<sup>152</sup> Placiard to Cardinal Caraffa, 5 December 1806, *ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*



*M.<sup>r</sup> Sicardi, Dominique*  
*Nommé Vicaire Général*  
*30 Octobre 1804. Mort 13 Juin 1819.*

Carlo Domenico Sicardi, C.M., Italian vicar general, 1804-1806,  
 1817-1819; pro-vicar 1806-1807; first assistant, 1817-1819

On that same day, Placiard also wrote to Sicardi appealing for his support in unifying the Congregation.<sup>154</sup> Placiard's letters to Rome did not arrive before the issuance of the brief *Accepimus Nuper* on 9 December 1806.<sup>155</sup> The terms of this brief confirmed the status quo of the schism and represented another victory for Sicardi and the Italians.

Early in 1807, Placiard appealed to the pope and to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to end the schism.<sup>156</sup> He again warned Rome of the consequences of its support for Sicardi.

The Emperor of the French has protected the houses of the Congregation of the Mission in the former republic of Genoa, in the kingdom of Italy, and in the former duchy of Parma. He has done so only because of their connection with a Congregation which according to its constitutions has always had its headquarters in Paris. M. Sicardi's pretensions could cause the suppression of the Italian houses that previously have escaped this fate. I have accepted the office of vicar general only at the insistence of my confreres, and because a refusal on my part would have destroyed our hopes of resuming all our former ministries throughout the French empire. I will be forced to submit my resignation if I cannot fulfill this mission, and there can be no doubt that I must do so if M. Sicardi usurps my jurisdiction. Naturally, the French government will wish to know the reason for my resignation, and then M. Sicardi will only have himself to blame for the consequences of the discontent that he has caused by his pretensions.<sup>157</sup>

Sicardi, who learned of Placiard's correspondence, opposed the restoration of the French vicar general's authority. He denied that the Italians were the cause of the schism, or that they had any desire to move the Congregation's headquarters to Rome.<sup>158</sup> Several months later, Sicardi wrote to the visitors of the provinces of Spain and Portugal. He complained that he had received no correspondence from them although by virtue of the papal briefs they were under his jurisdiction.<sup>159</sup>

On 19 June 1807, the Holy See issued yet another brief entitled, *Qua Semper Voluntate*. This document superseded all previous briefs

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<sup>154</sup> Placiard to Sicardi, 5 December 1806, *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Acta Apostolica*, 178-80.

<sup>156</sup> Placiard to Cardinal Caraffa and to Pius VII, 5 January 1807, *Placiard*, ACMP.

<sup>157</sup> Placiard to Cardinal Caraffa, 5 January, *ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> Sicardi to Pius VII, memorandum of January or February 1807, *ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Sicardi to the visitors of the provinces of Spain and Portugal, 29 April 1807, *ibid.*

issued during the controversy.<sup>160</sup> The brief recognized Placiard's authority as vicar general of the entire Congregation. Placiard could choose his own assistants and name his successor. The pope also ordered that Sicardi serve as first assistant but dispensed him from residing in Paris. On 10 July, Placiard sent Sicardi a copy of the brief and informed him whom he had named as the other assistants.

Placiard and the French hoped that the June brief would bring an end to the schism. In August, however, Placiard received a letter from Sicardi telling him that "Without a doubt, you still cannot exercise any jurisdiction in the Congregation."<sup>161</sup> Sicardi also sent a copy of the papal brief to the visitors, accompanied by a letter defending his interpretation.<sup>162</sup> He rejected Placiard's authority on the basis of a passing phrase in the brief referring to the needed reestablishment of a Parisian mother house. Sicardi claimed that Placiard could not exercise his jurisdiction as vicar general "until the Congregation's affairs are settled."<sup>163</sup> In Sicardi's view, this meant that the French needed to be in actual possession of a new house in Paris. Secondly, the French also had to restore the full observance "of the community exercises as they previously were observed."<sup>164</sup> Until then, Sicardi vowed to continue to exercise jurisdiction over the Congregation as first assistant. Étienne described Sicardi's activities as representing "new chicaneries."<sup>165</sup>

Placiard continued the duel of competing circulars with a letter he issued on 9 September 1807. He claimed again that the pope had granted him full authority as vicar general. Not only that, but he claimed an extraordinary permission to exercise the authority of the superior general until the general assembly's convocation. He quoted Cardinal Caraffa as saying that it was the Holy See's desire that the Congregation return to the state in which it had existed before the revolution.<sup>166</sup>

Sicardi was desperate to maintain his authority, and the Italian position. He continued to grasp at this last weak straw. The Italian position, however, became untenable. The visitor of Spain wrote to Placiard submitting to his authority. On 16 September 1807, Placiard unexpectedly died.

<sup>160</sup> *Acta Apostolica*, 180-83.

<sup>161</sup> Sicardi to Placiard, 9 August 1806, *Placiard*, ACMP.

<sup>162</sup> Circular letter of Sicardi, dated 15 August 1806, *ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> Circular letter of Sicardi, dated 2 September 1807, *ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 12.

<sup>166</sup> Cardinal Caraffa to Placiard, 24 June 1807, *Placiard*, ACMP.

### Dominique Hanon: A Very Brief Respite

On 24 September 1807, the Lazarists who resided in Paris gathered to nominate a new vicar general since Placiard had not chosen one before his untimely death. They selected Dominique-François Hanon, the superior of the seminary at Amiens.<sup>167</sup> The French wrote to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars asking for papal confirmation of Hanon's nomination. They also stated their opposition to any consideration of Sicardi's again serving as pro-vicar.<sup>168</sup>

On 14 October 1807, with a swiftness completely uncharacteristic of Rome, the Holy See recognized Hanon as "vicar general of the entire Congregation of the Mission." The brief also granted him "all the rights, privileges, and faculties afforded to the vicar general by the constitutions of the said Congregation, whether those concerning the vicars general or the superiors general."<sup>169</sup> In addition, Hanon could name his successor and exercise his authority without waiting for the acquisition of a new mother house.

Sicardi and the Italians recognized their defeat. At this time, French troops were occupying the various states of central Italy and were closing in on Rome. Undoubtedly, this situation helped convince the Holy See to drop its support of Sicardi.<sup>170</sup> On 14 January 1808, Sicardi wrote to Hanon admitting defeat. "The Sovereign Pontiff's brief makes it clear that you are named, approved, and confirmed as the vicar general of the entire Congregation of the Mission with all requisite powers, and without any limitations....I thank God for this."<sup>171</sup>

On 7 January 1808, Napoleon confirmed Hanon as "Superior of the Mission known under the title of Saint-Lazare."<sup>172</sup> Now that he was in undisputed control, the new vicar general turned his attention to the Congregation's "effective reestablishment...as it existed before the revolution."<sup>173</sup> In a circular letter to all French missionaries and former members, Hanon reviewed the events that had led to his being chosen and recognized as vicar general. He informed them that finally "All the Missionaries outside France are now reunited in their depen-

<sup>167</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Hanon see *Circulaires*, 2: 279-81.

<sup>168</sup> M. Claude to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, September 1807, Hanon, ACMP.

<sup>169</sup> *Acta Apostolica*, 183-85.

<sup>170</sup> *Stella, Italia*, 464.

<sup>171</sup> Sicardi to Hanon, 14 January 1808, Hanon, ACMP.

<sup>172</sup> *Actes du Gouvernement*, 101.

<sup>173</sup> Hanon, *Circulaires*, 2: 282.

dance on a single head residing in Paris."<sup>174</sup> Hanon acknowledged, however, that an even more difficult task faced him, "that of reuniting all the confreres who are presently dispersed throughout the French empire."<sup>175</sup>

In the years since 1804, only a handful of former French Lazarists had chosen, or were able, to return to the restored Congregation. Some still doubted whether the restored Congregation was the same Congregation that had existed before the Revolution. Others accepted the Congregation's reestablishment but doubted whether the community existed on a firm enough basis to justify the risks that they would have to take to return.

After reviewing the Government's actions favoring the community, Hanon concluded, "Thus it is beyond doubt, and all confreres should believe as I myself believe...that it is not a new body, but our Congregation of the Mission...which the Government had the intention of reestablishing by virtue of its decrees and the assistance it has given us."<sup>176</sup> Hanon candidly admitted that the Congregation was not yet "effectively reestablished." He held out the hope that given the emperor's favor that day was not far away. Meanwhile, he pledged to work for the Congregation's complete restoration "as soon as possible."<sup>177</sup>

Throughout 1808 and into 1809 Hanon worked feverishly, and with initial success, to solidify the restoration. He sought government protection of Lazarist interests in Italy and negotiated to obtain a new mother house in Paris. Hanon recognized the importance of the community's missionary mandate. He therefore sought to expand the missions in Barbary, the Levant, the Isles of Réunion and France, the Ottoman Empire, and Persia. Unfortunately, it would not be long before the emperor's favor, upon which everything depended, was lost.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 2: 283.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 2: 284.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 3

### Restoration, Dissolution, Restoration, and Schism Napoleon and the Daughters of Charity

On 13 February 1806, Napoleon wrote Pius VII, "In the temporal sphere your Holiness will have for me the regard that I have for him in the spiritual. Your Holiness is the sovereign of Rome, but I am the Emperor and all my enemies must be his."<sup>1</sup> The pope, however, refused to support the emperor's anti-English foreign policy. He also wanted to safeguard the sovereignty of the Papal States. These positions caused relations between the Holy See and the emperor to worsen. On 17 May 1809, these relations collapsed as the empire annexed the Papal States. Several months later, the French took the pope into custody, beginning a five-year incarceration.

Simultaneously, because of the British sea blockade, the foreign missions played less of a factor in the emperor's plans. Because of these developments, the Lazarists' utility became more tenuous. Fatally, Napoleon also came to doubt their loyalty. The most important factor, however, in the Congregation's and Hanon's fall from favor, concerned a struggle over the control of the Daughters of Charity. By 1809, 1,653 sisters were serving in 274 houses scattered throughout France.<sup>2</sup> After the restoration of 1804, the French vicar general again exercised his authority as the sisters' ecclesiastical superior. The restoration of this authority, however, was not acceptable to all the sisters. In his *Notice*, Étienne described the situation in this way: "Another intrigue was hatched in Paris. This had the goal of removing the Company of the Daughters of Charity from the authority of the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and to place them instead under the authority of the archdiocese of Paris. The idea behind this schism was not new. The Daughters of Charity who had reestablished the Company in 1800 were the ones who had conceived this plan. These sisters were inclined to novelty, and they were inspired by a love of independence."<sup>3</sup>

On at least three occasions between 1800 and 1807, the government requested that the community submit a copy of its constitutions. Sisters

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 1: 154-55.

<sup>2</sup> AN.F4.1048.

<sup>3</sup> Étienne, *Notice*, 12.